

4. Awareness Education Training

4.1 What is an awareness class?

CSS Awareness Training is one hour to half a day in length and can involve as many as 100 to 200 participants in a session. It is intended to be a quick introduction to the concepts of CSS, concentrating on the Remembering and Understanding levels of learning, without delving into application or analysis (see Figure D). It generally covers the definition, principles, qualities and outcomes of CSS, benefits of CSS and how CSS fits into decision-making in all phases of project delivery.

In addition, an awareness class can be an opportunity for DOT leadership to communicate their commitment to integrating CSS into DOT policies and procedures. The importance of the senior leadership role in motivating staff to implement CSS is discussed further in Sections 2.1 and 2.4.

4.2 What are the benefits of an awareness class?

CSS Awareness Training:

- provides a relatively efficient means for a Commissioner or Secretary, or senior manager such as the Chief Engineer, to speak directly to staff to communicate senior management's commitment to CSS;
- provides the opportunity to:
 - reach quickly a large number of staff, ensuring a consistency of message;
 - explain what senior managers believe that CSS is and what it is not (to dispel myths about CSS);
 - “roll out” a CSS policy or program and explain the expectations of executive leadership;
 - explain senior managers' views of how developing projects and programs to reflect CSS can benefit the DOT and its customers;
 - cite examples of current or completed projects within the state that utilize CSS principles and qualities to show that this way of doing business is not completely new;
 - explain how the CSS approach affects decision-making and how it impacts the project development process;
 - encourage adoption by all staff of the CSS mindset;
 - explain that the CSS philosophy affects the work of every staff member and provide examples to demonstrate this in functions from long range planning to operations and maintenance;
 - identify physical and human resources available to staff interested in incorporating CSS into their work;
 - identify gaps in knowledge and skills related to CSS that can be addressed by additional CSS training.

4.3 Who needs to attend an awareness class?

Awareness classes are useful for each group of DOT employees, including executives, managers, supervisors and staff (Figure E below) because they cover the basics of CSS that everyone needs to understand (Remembering and Understanding levels of learning, see Figure D and Chapter 2). They can be especially effective in reaching executives, who typically do not have the time to devote to more intensive forms of training. For other groups of employees, awareness classes may serve as the basis for additional, more in-depth training. By having all groups participate in the same awareness classes, a state DOT can ensure that staff throughout the organization have a consistent understanding and basis for implementing CSS in their work.

An awareness class can benefit staff from all functional areas, even those who will not be applying CSS directly. Even staff who are not responsible for implementing CSS principles on a day to day basis (i.e. human resources, accounting, etc.) can benefit from awareness of it, to better understand its role in the delivery of projects and plans. When forming rosters for awareness sessions, it is important to ensure that there is a mix of staff from different groups and different functional areas in each session. Participants in each session benefit from hearing from the experiences and questions of others.



Figure E. CSS Educational Needs by Organizational Role

4.4 What might be included in an awareness class curriculum?

Through the research and interview process during the preparation of this Guide, a table of existing awareness classes was compiled to provide examples to state DOTs interested in developing or improving their own CSS awareness training. [Click here to access the Existing Awareness CSS Classes table.](#)

The information on existing classes illustrates how different state DOTs have used awareness training for purposes tailored to the needs of the DOT staff. Many have rolled out awareness training in a systematic manner, reaching out statewide, while others have crafted tailored classes for specific groups. Any agency or organization should first begin the development of a class by

establishing specific learning goals and objectives that reflect the agency wide strategic plan (mission, vision, goals) and business approach (see Chapter 3).

The following concepts are generally covered to some extent in most awareness classes:

- CSS definition, principles, qualities and outcomes
- Benefits of implementing CSS
- Decision-making processes throughout all phases of project delivery

Additional topics may include:

- The history of CSS
- National CSS initiatives
- State DOT CSS policy
- Case studies of CSS applications
- Group exercises

The specific examples used during awareness training should ideally be local to the state or region where the class is held, and some state DOTs have found success in adapting slightly the content of awareness classes to the audience of each session. Following are a few effective learning/teaching techniques for awareness classes:

- Tennessee DOT recruited senior executives including the Chief Engineer and Chief of Environment and Planning to assist in teaching part of their awareness class. Having the active participation of leadership, rather than simply reading a statement or a policy, proved especially effective for TDOT. TDOT also actively sought to show CSS examples that had already taken place in Tennessee and identify class participants who had taken part in those projects. Those participants were able to add to the discussion of the project and were recognized for their efforts. (See Agenda and Slides from this class)
- Awareness classes in Minnesota and Colorado included group role-playing exercises to more actively engage participants. While these exercises are more common in the 2 to 3 day CSS basic classes, these states' class exercises illustrate how abbreviated versions can be incorporated into a shorter awareness class.